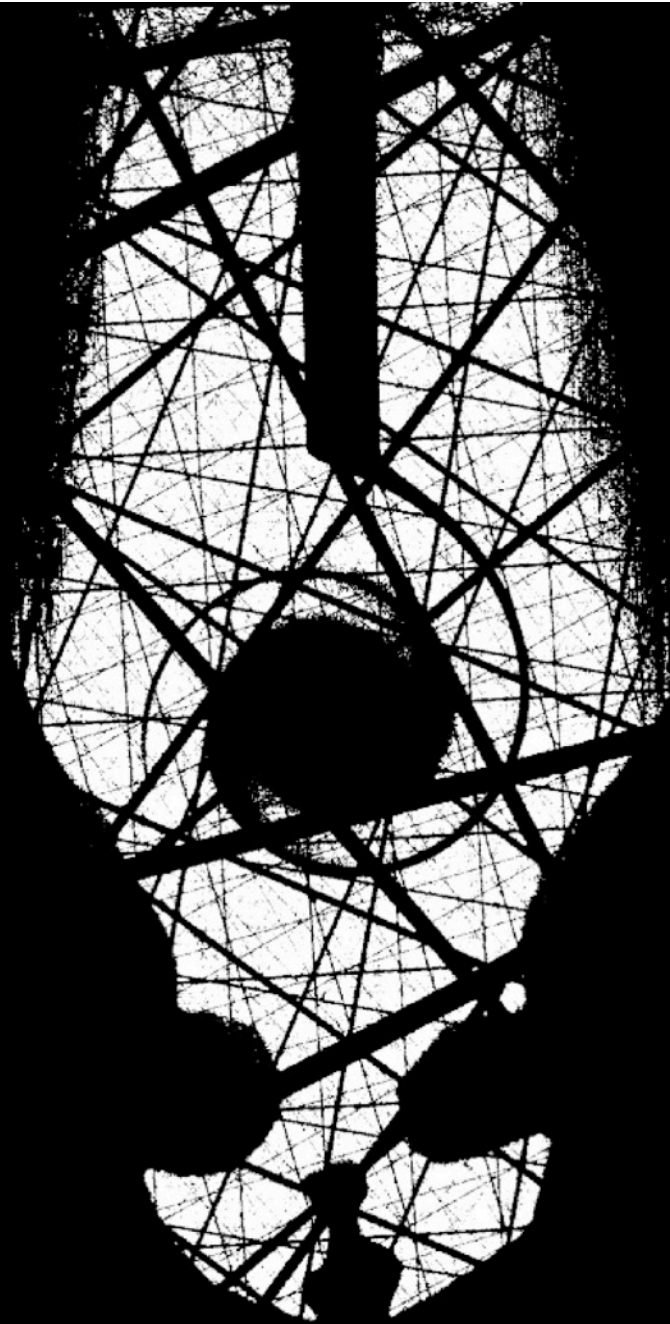




ENTER THE RABBIT

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Specular Axiology, Optical Sovereignty, and the Dismantling of the House of Cards

FIELD MANUAL v4.0
The Geometry of Survival

BY SUM BUNNY

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ENTER THE RABBIT

Specular Axiology, Optical Sovereignty, and the Dismantling of the House of Cards

By SUM BUNNY 2025

ENTER THE RABBIT is a field manual for the 21st-century ethical citizen. It maps the "War on Mirrors" — the systematic sabotage of our ability to see the future, the detail, and the structure.

Accept the recruitment of the Periscopic Herald. It is time to smash the false reflections. It is time to verify the structure. It is time to learn how to see.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

- **Specular Axiology:** The study of value as a function of optical capacity. The premise that we cannot value what we cannot see.
- **Axiological Light:** The raw signal of moral reality (suffering, risk, joy, structure) before it enters a cognitive lens.
- **Salience Gating:** The neural mechanism by which the brain filters axiological light. If a signal does not pass the gate, it does not exist to the observer.
- **Optical Sovereignty:** The unalienable right of a moral agent to own, calibrate, and deploy their own instruments of perception without institutional interference.
- **The House of Cards:** A political or social structure that appears solid only because it relies on a fixed, forced angle of vision (Periscopic Illusion).

PROLOGUE: THE OPTICIAN'S INVITATION

The world is not a given; it is a construct of angles. You have been trained to mistake the frame for the view, and the wall for the horizon. But at the edge of your vision, something moves against the grain. It runs oblique to the official story, checking a pocket watch that ticks on a different timeline. It is the White Rabbit, signaling you to check your lenses. Welcome to the optician's workshop. It is time to learn how to see.

ABSTRACT

Philosophers have long debated the nature of value—whether it is intrinsic property, subjective feeling, or social construction. This paper argues that the deepest question in ethics is neither metaphysical nor psychological. It is **optical**.

Value functions as **axiological light**. It possesses intensity, spectrum, and directionality. Yet, like physical light, it requires specific apparatuses to be captured. Values do not merely exist; they must be rendered **visible**. The conditions under which they appear—or remain in shadow—are systematically structured.

I propose a new field, *Specular Axiology*, to examine the "mirror-operators" that determine the boundaries of perception. Drawing on Stephen C. Pepper (Telescope), Thomas Kuhn (Microscope), Alfred Jarry (Kaleidoscope), and Nelson Goodman (Periscope), I identify four distinct visibility-operators.

This framework reinterprets the "Rabbit Hole" not as a descent into madness, but as an initiation into optical awareness. By juxtaposing the mirror-smashing epistemology of *Enter the Dragon* with the structural dismantling of *Alice in Wonderland*, I expose a mechanism of power deeper than *Manufacturing Consent*. Consent is not merely shaped by controlling information; it is shaped by controlling **value visibility**.

To "Enter the Rabbit" is to accept the recruitment of the Periscopic Herald—the guide who reveals that the seemingly solid institutions of power are often merely a House of Cards, sustained only by a fixed and forced angle of vision.

I. INTRODUCTION: THE GEOMETRY OF ATTENTION

Ethical theory usually assumes a direct line of sight between the moral agent and the moral object. This paper challenges that assumption. We do not see the world directly; we see it through cognitive instruments. Just as the naked eye cannot perceive a microbe or a distant galaxy, the naked moral intuition cannot perceive values that are too small, too distant, too complex, or structurally occluded.

Value is axiological light. And like light, it requires specific apparatuses to be captured.

Why "Mirrors"?

Why employ the language of mirrors rather than "perspectives" or "narratives"? Because perspectives imply a subjective stance, whereas mirrors imply a **structural geometry**. Mirrors obey laws of incidence and reflection; they possess focal lengths and distortion indices. Unlike abstract viewpoints, mirrors capture, redirect, and prioritize light—paralleling the neural mechanisms of salience. Most crucially, mirrors are physical apparatuses that can be built, polished, sabotaged, or—as we shall see—smashed. They are the material infrastructure of attention.

The Cognitive Bridge: Bandwidth as Destiny

This infrastructure is vital because cognitive bandwidth is finite. Cognitive science demonstrates that valuation is downstream of **salience**. The brain's attentional networks function as a gating mechanism: we cannot value what we cannot attend to.

In the 21st-century attention economy, moral attention is a scarce resource. If a potential moral object (a future generation, a microscopic harm) does not achieve salience, it never enters the arena of moral judgment. Therefore, "invisible harms" are not necessarily failures of empathy; they are failures of the **salience apparatus**.

Modern societies are not suffering from a lack of values but from a collapse in value-visibility. The crisis is that we lack the optical bandwidth to process the signals of our own survival.

I propose **Specular Axiology** as the study of these apparatuses. I argue that human "worldmaking" (to use Nelson Goodman's term) relies on four primary **Mirror-Operators**:

1. **The Telescope** (Long-Range / Systemic)
2. **The Microscope** (Granular / Anomaly)
3. **The Kaleidoscope** (Plural / Mythic)
4. **The Periscope** (Oblique / Structural)

Power is the ability to grant or deny access to these mirrors. The ultimate form of censorship is not silencing a voice, but removing the lens required to see it.

II. THE FOUR MIRROR-OPERATORS

II.1. THE TELESCOPE (Stephen C. Pepper)

The Operator of Extension

The Optical Function: The telescope gathers faint light from the deep past or distant future and focuses it into a legible image. It collapses time, bringing the "there and then" into the "here and now."

The Philosophical Lineage: Stephen C. Pepper's *World Hypotheses* function as telescopes. His "root metaphors" are large-scale cognitive lenses that allow us to see structural coherence across vast distances. This aligns with **Hans Jonas's** *Imperative of Responsibility* and **Derek Parfit's** concern for "future people." The shared motif is distance—temporal or causal—and the blindness produced when distance exceeds the naked eye's focal length.

Optical Failure Mode: Foreshortening When the Telescope is miscalibrated, it produces *foreshortening*: distant risks appear trivial or compressed, leading to the illusion that the future is less "real" than the present.

Field Note: Diagnosis: *When a society speaks only in the grammar of the Fiscal Quarter, the Telescope is shattered. When the horizon line moves closer to your feet every day, you are suffering from foreshortening.*

II.2. THE MICROSCOPE (Thomas Kuhn)

The Operator of Resolution

The Optical Function: The microscope magnifies the granular. It forces the eye to acknowledge the texture, roughness, and animation of surfaces that appear smooth from a distance. It increases *resolution*.

The Philosophical Lineage: Thomas Kuhn's theory of scientific revolutions relies on the microscope. Paradigms shift only when someone focuses on a tiny *anomaly*—a data point that shouldn't exist—and refuses to look away. This contrasts with **James C. Scott's** concept of "legibility," where states prefer low-resolution simplification.

Optical Failure Mode: Overresolution When the Microscope is misused, it produces *overresolution*: the inability to distinguish signal from noise, leading to paralysis by detail.

Field Note: *Diagnosis: Bureaucracy is an anti-microscope technology. It turns "suffering" into "metrics." If you cannot see the texture of the individual face, your resolution is too low.*

II.3. THE KALEIDOSCOPE (Alfred Jarry)

The Operator of Refraction

The Optical Function: The kaleidoscope does not magnify or extend; it *multiplies*. It takes a single set of elements and, through rotation and reflection, generates infinite valid patterns.

The Philosophical Lineage: Alfred Jarry's *Pataphysics*—the "science of imaginary solutions"—is the ultimate kaleidoscope. It validates the existence of simultaneous, contradictory, yet equally "true" world-versions.

Optical Failure Mode: Paratactic Drift When the Kaleidoscope spins too fast, it produces *paratactic drift*: a relativistic vertigo where all patterns are equal, and no normative traction can be gained. **Plurality becomes parataxis when rotation replaces orientation.**

Field Note: *Diagnosis: Totalitarianism demands a static image. Nihilism spins the image until it blurs. The goal is not to spin forever, but to see the pattern that includes the others.*

II.4. THE PERISCOPE (Nelson Goodman)

The Operator of Circumvention

The Optical Function: The periscope allows vision around an obstacle. It is the tool of the submerged. It changes the *angle of incidence* to bypass a wall.

The Philosophical Lineage: Nelson Goodman's *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast* argues that our view of reality is shaped by "entrenched predicates." **Entrenchment is an active process:** we build cognitive habits that function as physical walls in cognitive space. The Periscope seeks "**rightness of rendering**" by forcing a new angle of incidence.

The Periscopic Herald: In the logic of Specular Axiology, the **White Rabbit** of Carroll's *Wonderland* is the archetypal Periscope. He is the Herald who runs at oblique angles to the official narrative. He bypasses the "entrenched" pathways of the Queen's court. To follow the Rabbit is to accept the necessity of the Periscope: to see around the wall of the "given" reality.

Optical Failure Mode: Angular Paranoia When the Periscope is locked in position, it produces *angular paranoia*: the assumption that *everything* is hidden, leading to a hermeneutics of suspicion where surface meaning is never trusted.

Field Note: Diagnosis: *The Rabbit is always late because he runs on a different timeline than the King. If you are comfortable, you are not using a Periscope.*

III. THE WAR ON MIRRORS: DEEP MANUFACTURE OF CONSENT

Herman and Chomsky argued that consent is manufactured by filtering **information**. Specular Axiology argues that consent is manufactured by seizing **optical instruments**. Social institutions function as *optical selection environments*. They actively sabotage specific mirrors to maintain power.

To hold power is to decide which mirrors survive.

This sabotage takes two primary forms, vividly illustrated by two myths of optical liberation: **Enter the Dragon** and **Enter the Rabbit**.

1. Enter the Dragon: Smashing the Weaponized Reflection

The mirror-room scene in *Enter the Dragon* illustrates the sabotage of the Kaleidoscope. Bruce Lee finds himself in a **weaponized optical environment**—a space designed to multiply illusions until the enemy is invisible.

Lee smashes the mirrors not out of rage, but out of **epistemic necessity**. In a rigged optical system, destruction becomes a form of perception. He performs a "destructive calibration," reducing the noise-to-signal ratio by shattering the false surfaces. This is the lesson: when the system uses mirrors to hide the truth, you must break the mirrors.

2. Enter the Rabbit: Dismantling the House of Cards

If Bruce Lee destroys the illusion, the White Rabbit exposes the structure. In *Alice in Wonderland*, the regime of the Queen of Hearts is a classic Periscopic illusion. It presents itself as a solid, terrifying legal system.

The White Rabbit recruits Alice to change her *angle of incidence*. By moving through the system obliquely—changing scale (Telescope/Microscope) and questioning logic (Periscope)—Alice eventually arrives at the trial. When she finally sees the system for what it is, she realizes: **"You're nothing but a pack of cards!"**

This is the **dismantling of the House of Cards**. The system was not solid; it was merely an *entrenched perspective* that relied on Alice remaining at a specific angle. Once she shifted her optical stance, the "wall" of the state was revealed to be flimsy paper.

The War on Mirrors is fought on these two fronts:

1. Smashing the false multipliers (The Dragon).
2. Exposing the fragile structure (The Rabbit).

The Sabotage Strategies

- **Smash the Telescope (Tyranny of the Now):** Enforce short-termism so the future creates no shadow.

- **Blur the Microscope (Violence of Abstraction):** Aggregate data until suffering loses its resolution.
- **Halt the Kaleidoscope (Enforcement of Norms):** Banish plurality to maintain a monochromatic orthodoxy.
- **Block the Periscope (Architecture of Denial):** Build walls of "plausible deniability" to hide the House of Cards.

IV. CONCLUSION: TOWARD OPTICAL SOVEREIGNTY

We are living in a crisis of value. We are trying to navigate a telescopic crisis (Climate) with microscopic tools (Quarterly Profits). We are governed by Houses of Cards that claim to be Fortresses.

The task of the ethical philosopher—and the ethical citizen—is to become an **Optician**. We must reclaim the mirrors.

We conclude with a definition of the ultimate ethical goal: **Optical Sovereignty**.

Optical Sovereignty is the unalienable right of a moral agent to possess, develop, and deploy all four mirror-operators without institutional interference. It guarantees:

1. **The Right to Extension:** To see and value the long-range future (Telescope).
2. **The Right to Resolution:** To see and value the specific and granular (Microscope).
3. **The Right to Plurality:** To see and value multiple valid world-versions (Kaleidoscope).
4. **The Right to Circumvention:** To see and value the structures hidden by power (Periscope).

Optical sovereignty is not only a personal right; it is the precondition of any functional democracy. Without the shared capacity to see the future, the detail, the other, and the structure, self-governance is impossible.

Value is light. But light requires a lens. **Value is angle-dependent, and angles can be controlled.**

The Rabbit is waiting at the edge of the field. **Enter the Rabbit.**

V. APPENDIX: THE MIRROR-OPERATOR QUADRANT

To visualize the interactions of these operators, we can map them onto a two-dimensional axiological plane:

Figure 1: The Four Mirror-Operators

- **X-AXIS: SCALE (Micro ↔ Macro)**
 - **Y-AXIS: ANGLE (Direct ↔ Oblique)**
1. **Top Right (Macro + Direct): The Telescope** (Seeing the Big Picture).
 2. **Top Left (Micro + Direct): The Microscope** (Seeing the Fine Detail).
 3. **Bottom Right (Macro + Oblique): The Periscope** (Seeing the Hidden Structure/
Rabbit).
 4. **Bottom Left (Micro + Oblique): The Kaleidoscope** (Seeing the Plural Pattern).

VI. FIELD NOTES & ARCHITECTURAL SOURCES

(Annotated Bibliography for the Optician-Initiate)

These texts provide the optical components used to construct Specular Axiology. They are grouped by operational function for ease of deployment.

A. THE FOUR OPERATOR SOURCES (Optical Primitives)

1. The Telescope — Pepper

- **Source:** Stephen C. Pepper, *World Hypotheses: A Study in Evidence*. 1942.

- **Function:** Provides the long-range focal length. Pepper's "root metaphors" are conceptual telescopes—lenses that gather faint systemic signals across vast scales of time and causality.

2. The Microscope — Kuhn

- **Source:** Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 1962.
- **Function:** Source of anomaly-detection. Kuhn's revolution-triggering anomalies embody the microscopic detail capable of overturning paradigmatic smoothness.

3. The Kaleidoscope — Jarry

- **Source:** Alfred Jarry, *Exploits & Opinions of Dr. Faustroll, Pataphysician*. 1911.
- **Function:** Supplies controlled rotational multiplicity. Jarry's pataphysics demonstrates how patterned refraction generates alternative world-orders.

4. The Periscope — Goodman

- **Source:** Nelson Goodman, *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast*. 1955.
- **Function:** Architectural text on entrenchment. Goodman models how categories become walls; the Periscope is the tool that reorients the angle of incidence to see around them.

B. THE CONTEXTUAL TARGETS (Power, Salience, Visibility)

5. Predictive Optics — Clark

- **Source:** Andy Clark, *Surfing Uncertainty: Prediction, Action, and the Embodied Mind*. 2016.
- **Function:** Establishes the brain's predictive architecture. Supports the claim that **salience emerges from precision-weighting**—the cognitive substrate for why invisible harms fail to register.

6. Information-Control Prototype — Herman & Chomsky

- **Source:** Edward S. Herman & Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*. 1988.
- **Function:** Describes media filtering. This is the predecessor system: "Information Control." Specular Axiology upgrades this model to "Optical Control."

7. State Optics — Scott

- **Source:** James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State*. 1998.
- **Function:** Canonical analysis of state-sponsored low-resolution vision. Explains why power systems blur the microscope to make populations legible.

8. Temporal Occlusion — Nixon

- **Source:** Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. 2011.
- **Function:** Case study of telescopic failure. Demonstrates how harm dispersed across time becomes invisible without long-focal-length optics.

C. MYTHIC & KINETIC SOURCES (Operational Allegories)

9. The Periscopic Herald — Carroll

- **Source:** Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. 1865.
- **Function:** The White Rabbit models oblique access routes. Wonderland serves as a laboratory for angle-shifts and for exposing the House of Cards as an entrenchment illusion.

10. The Mirror-Room Sabotage — *Enter the Dragon*

- **Source:** *Enter the Dragon*, dir. Robert Clouse, Warner Bros., 1973.
- **Function:** Provides the paradigmatic example of **epistemic destruction**. The mirror-room sequence illustrates destructive calibration: breaking false reflectors to restore signal fidelity.

THE WORLD IS NOT A GIVEN. IT IS A CONSTRUCT OF ANGLES.

We are living in a crisis of value, but it is not because we have forgotten what is good. It is because we have lost the optical capacity to see it. We are trying to navigate a telescopic crisis (Climate) with microscopic tools (Quarterly Profits). We are governed by Houses of Cards that claim to be Fortresses.

A NOTE ON THE SYNTHETIC:

The Rabbit provided the direction, the logic, and the madness; the AI provided the syntax and the shine. No actual rabbits were harmed in the making of this PDF, though several GPUs are currently very tired.

VALUE IS LIGHT. BUT LIGHT REQUIRES A LENS.

EX
PARADOXO
LUX

FREE FLASH